

Central MRS Meeting
July 20, 2005
Alamance County

Counties Present: Alamance, Chatham, Davidson, Davie, Guilford, Mecklenburg, Orange, Union, Wake

Non MRS Counties: Randolph

State Staff: Tony Troop, Denise Shipman, Tom Smith, Dawn Warren, Holly McNeill, Susan Sanderson, Heather Thomas

Agenda

Legislation

Evaluation

Training

Staff Changes

PIP CFSR

IVE Review

Division Letters

MRS Learning Institute 2005 & 2006

Next Meetings

Discussion Two Policy Issues

Legislation

- Changes to 7B, effective 10/1, signed by the Governor in May.
- Can read on web HB277, click on the last one for the final version it mostly just changes the language.
- Big change if the incident occurs at a day care, workers no longer have to visit the child's home.
- HB 1311 concerning DV victims possibly being able to get an immediate permit to carry concealed is still out there still time to weigh in on that
- Several other things still unresolved out there will wait to discuss until we know something one way or the other.

Evaluation

- Heather said programmers are working on Phase 2 of the web based system. Largest user difference is that it will distinguish between 210 and 215 and enable entry for children on the same form number at the same time. Not sure when this will roll out because of the pending changes to the 5104.
- Heather will be starting an evaluation/data list serve. All people that attended training on the web system will be signed up. If anyone else would like to be signed up, please let her know via email.
- Tony is also starting an MRS email: nc.mrs@ncmail.net

- Duke currently working on evaluation making site visits to counties now.
- Tony will be sending out some data warehouse info as of 6/30. Includes the number of cases of neglect of dependency that were done as family assessment.
 - Need to realize what these numbers mean and what they do not. They may provide clues to look closer at something, but they only reflect what was entered into the Central Registry at the time Tony ran the report, and also consider that there are some types of neglect and dependency that cannot be taken as family assessment. Finally, counties were still implementing this year and this data is for the whole fiscal year.

Training

- 52 current MRS counties no longer the priority.
- Will try to train the 48 in policy in fall and winter to have 100% trained by January 2, 2006.

Staff Changes

- A lot of these at the Division.
- Adolph Simmons (data management) and Todd Hayes (review) left for other positions.
- Carl Brazile (work first), Amelia Lance (adoption), and Sabrina Southern (review) went to NC Fast.
- Several vacancies now at the Division.

PIP/Child & Family Services Review

- Final notice that NC is out of program improvement status.
- Will be reviewed again in April June timeframe. They will be concentrating on: Foster Care, Services to Youth (teens, special needs), Relationships to federally recognized tribes. The reviewers will also interview court judges.
- Last time the benchmarks were 90%, this time they are 95%.

IV-E Review

- We passed. Were allowed to be in error on 4 cases, we had 3 with errors.
- Eckerd Camps originally the feds said these were not Foster Care settings so they were not IV-E eligible. North Carolina successfully showed that the camps do meet the definition of foster care so we are allowed to use IV-E.

Division Letters

- There are a lot of Dear County Director Letters please check the web for those.

Learning Institute

- Comment that it filled up. Tony replied that because of the way it was funded participation had to be limited. The speakers were paid for by

- training money but that could not cover meals and lodging and that had to come out of another pot of money which will not be available again.
- In planning for 2006 Institute decided not to have it in June at the end of a fiscal year so that counties would have funds to send folks.
- Will begin planning soon let Tony know if you are interested.

Next Meetings

- Next Central meeting will be at Forsyth Public Health. Probably Monday August 22nd.
- Tony is open to suggestions as to where to have the September meeting of the 52. If no suggestions he will go with his own resources, which means likely Winston Salem State.

Miscellaneous other issues/questions/discussion

- Language codes now cannot enter the 5027 without one but there is no place on the form. You can still enter the 5104. Some confusion if letter or something about this was sent out, Tony will follow up.
- After the MRS policy is changed, the process of changing Chapter 8 will begin. Start thinking of things to include. Also changing Administrative Code.
- NC is becoming known for MRS. Recently the Division hosted visitors from Canada who had searched internationally and decided to model their system after MRS in NC.
- There will be a MRS newsletter put out by John McMann.

Policy Discussion

There are two issues that need to be discussed. Tony will get feedback from all 3 meetings this month and then draft a response to JoAnn based on county input.

Issue #1 Current MRS policy states that with Intensive or High Risk there must be weekly contacts but twice a month must meet with all family members, however general CPS policy states that for Intensive or High Risk families there must be visits with the victim children and their caretakers. We need to clarify are we saying that twice a month contact had to be with all family members for family assessment cases, even if some of those family members are not considered to have safety issues?

- If you only have to make contact with victim children, you still need to look at the family as a whole for assessment.
- Whatever we set as the minimum is what will happen often due to high caseloads.
- Is it family friendly not to see the whole family?
- Is it family friendly to make children who are not the issue be at all these meetings?
- Part of this depends on if counties take an all or nothing approach to substantiation.

- Tony's suggestion to say something along the lines of for all Intensive and High risk cases, substantiated and services needed children and their caretakers should be seen twice a month. There is also the expectation that other members of the family been seen frequently enough to accurately assess their needs and provide services to meet those needs. Tony will clean up phrasing and send out via email for last chance to comment. This will give line workers a chance to comment.
- We are not changing the requirements for the off week.

Issue #2 Concern regarding child on child sexual contact. Currently if the parents are providing adequate supervision this is screened out, and if it is not, it is taken as a neglect case, making it eligible for family assessment. Several advocacy groups believe that these cases should be required to be investigative cases, and counties should not be allowed the latitude to decide how best to handle them. (This concern also extends to suspicious injuries.)

- The advocacy groups think this is not safe because:
 - May be assigning what is a sexual abuse case to a worker with no sexual abuse training.
 - Although not always the case, frequently the child perp is a victim themselves and if you interview the family together you may be interviewing the child perp in front of the parent who sexually abused them.
 - Evidence gathering process is tainted by interviewing family together.
- Tony tried to get information from other states on how they deal with this and could only reach Missouri if there is anything indicating intentional maltreatment they take the case as investigative assessment.
- Davie county uses the rule that if they make a referral to Law Enforcement, then it becomes forensic (this includes DV as well)
- Need to keep in mind that CPS has a specific job and DSS is not the end-all-be-all only game in town. CPS cannot do everything and be the solution to every issue surrounding children.
- The group consensus was to leave the policy as is and let counties use professional judgment